

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Claims 1-11 and 14-21 are active in this application.

Claims 20 and 21 remain withdrawn.

Support for the amendment to Claim 1 is found in Claims 12 and 13, which have now been cancelled; and the specification on page 3, lines 15-20. Entry of the amendment and reconsideration of the rejection is requested. At minimum, Applicants request entry of the amendment as it does not raise any new issues or require further consideration as the amendment is incorporating the limitations of claims 12 and 13, which have already been searched and considered.

As described in the application, the invention provides a process which permits the continuous chromium-free coating of pipe. In this process, the coating is achieved by what is referred to as a "whirl sintering tank" that permits the avoidance of powder accumulations above the pipe and shortage of powder underneath the pipe in the tank. In terms of the claimed limitations that defines this, attention is directed to the components of the fluidized bed in Claim 1 (added from Claims 12 and 13). As discussed in the specification on page 3, lines 15-20, a fluidized-bed coating basin including an air-flush system above the pipe for eliminating powder accumulations and metal flow-guide panels below the pipe for eliminating powder deficits and any resultant pores on the underside of the pipe. Pipes having uniform layer thickness, both radially and axially, can be reliably produced when the fluidized-bed coating basin contains such devices.

The claimed process, which utilizes such a fluidized bed apparatus coupled with the chromate free coating and the frequency of induction coil is not described nor suggested by the art cited in the Office Action. Further details follows.

In the Office Action, the Examiner has rejected Claims 1-10, 12, 14-16 and 18-19 as being obvious in view of the Quresti patent (cited previously) in view of either U.S. Patent

No. 5,176,755 (Winkle) or U.S. Patent No. 4,358,887 (Creps). As acknowledged by the Examiner the Quresti patent does not describe the frequency for induction coil heating and only optionally includes treating with chromate. For the particular frequencies, the Examiner relies on the Winkle or Creps patents (see pages 2-3 of the Office Action).

First, Claim 13 was not subject to the rejection in view of Quresti, Winkle, and Creps and correctly so because none of the cited documents describe or suggest the limitations pertaining to the fluidized bed which includes an air flush system positioned above the pipe and one or more metal flow-guide panels positioned below the pipe (referencing previous Claim 13 and Claim 1 as amended herein). Accordingly, it is requested that the rejection of Claims 1-10, 12, 14-16 and 19-19 under 35 USC 103(a) in view of Quresti, Winkle, and Creps be withdrawn.

In a similar manner, the rejection of Claims 1, 14 and 19 under 35 USC 102(b) in view of Church with Winkle or Creps is no longer applicable in light of the amendment incorporating the limitations of Claims 12 and 13 into Claim 1. Accordingly, withdrawal of this ground of rejection is requested.

The remaining rejection is one in which the previously cited Facer patent to reject Claims 11, 13 and 17 when combined with the Quresti, Winkle and Creps to allege that Claims 11, 13 and 17 would have been obvious. No reasons are given other than referencing section 7 of the 11/17/05 Action. In that November 2005 action, it was the position that Facer teaches the advantages of conventional means of air flow and would have been equally advantageous to include such into Quresti to draw off fumes (see page 5 of the November 2005 Office Action). Facer describes the use of air flow “to purge the priming fumes and to keep the coil free of accumulations” (col. 3, lines 22-23) to maintain the bed in “fluidized state” (col. 3, line 27), and “to prevent agglomeration of the resin at the wire entrance and

exit points” (col. 3, lines 32-33). What is missing from this disclosure is a description or suggestion to specifically arrange an air flush system in the fluidized bed coating basin which is positioned above the pipe and one or more metal flow-guide panels positioned below the pipe. As discussed hereinabove, this particular arrangement in a chromate-free system for coating pipe yield pipes having uniform layer thickness, both radially and axially, can be reliably produced. Attention is also directed to the Example provided on page 7, and particularly, lines 28-29, in which the Applicants state that the advantages of this apparatus in terms of the air-flush system and metal flow-guide panels enables uniform coating thickness.

Therefore, the arrangement and purpose of the air used in the Facer patent is completely different from an air flush system in the fluidized bed coating basin which is positioned above the pipe and one or more metal flow-guide panels positioned below the pipe. As it is clear that the Questri, Winkle or Creps patents also fail to describe or suggest this particularly claimed arrangement in the fluidized bed coating basin, Questri, Winkle, or Creps when combined with Facer simply cannot render the claims obvious because (1) the combination of art does not actually describe the claimed invention; and (2) the art would have not been modified (and particular Facer would not have been modified) to yield the claimed process because doing so would go against the explicit teachings of what is to be accomplished by the Facer process and apparatus.

It is requested that this rejection be withdrawn as well.

Application No. 10/624,590

Reply to Office Action of April 6, 2006

A Notice of Allowance for all pending claims is earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner deem that any further action is necessary to place this application in even form for allowance, she is encouraged to contact Applicants' undersigned representative.

Respectfully submitted,

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